

NUTRITION CONNECTIONS
PEOPLE, PROGRAMS, and SCIENCE



Summary Report

**Food and Nutrition Service
National Nutrition Education
Conference**



Introduction

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) held its first National nutrition education conference, "Nutrition Connections: People, Programs, and Science," on February 24-26, 2003 at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, DC. This report reviews the highlights and successes of this very popular FNS conference. The overriding goal of the conference was to facilitate integration of nutrition education into all FNS Programs by encouraging cross-program collaboration, disseminating knowledge, and promoting the use of effective nutrition education strategies among nutrition staff working in and with FNS nutrition assistance programs at the Federal, State, and local levels. The conference also encouraged FNS staff and cooperators to communicate consistent nutrition, food, and physical activity messages that motivate FNS target populations to make healthy food and lifestyle choices throughout the life cycle.

Conference Objectives:

- Build skills in nutrition education theory, practice, and evaluation
- Apply networking and partnership skills to foster cross-program nutrition education in FNS nutrition assistance programs
- Learn about and apply successful approaches for providing integrated and comprehensive nutrition education
- Understand FNS nutrition priorities, current and emerging initiatives, and the resources and tools to help address them



Attendees

Conference attendees represented multi-levels of government, including State, local and federal as well as non-profit, advocacy, and educational organizations.

- More than 900 people registered for the conference. All 50 States, the District of Columbia, Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico represented and Indian Tribal Organizations participated as well.
- All FNS nutrition assistance programs and USDA agencies with a nutrition focus participated (FSIS, AMS, REE). All FNS Regional Offices were represented.
- Other Governmental agencies, participating included the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Food and Drug Administration, General Accounting Office, National Institutes of Health and the National Cancer Institute (NCI), Department of Defense, Administration on Aging.
- Key organizations and partners included: American School Food Service Association (ASFSA), National WIC Association (NWA), American Public Health Services Association (APHSA), American Dietetic Association (ADA); Society for Nutrition Education (SNE), Child and Adult Food Program (CACFP) National Professional Association, National Commodity Supplemental Food Program Association, National Association of Food Distribution Programs on Indian Reservations, National Association of Farmers Market Nutrition Programs (NAFMNP), National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI), and Association of State and Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors (ASTPHND).



Profile of Registrants

As shown in Table 1, almost 40% of conference registrants work at the State level, about 20% work at the Federal level, and over 10% work for non-profit agencies.

Place of Employment of Conference Registrants

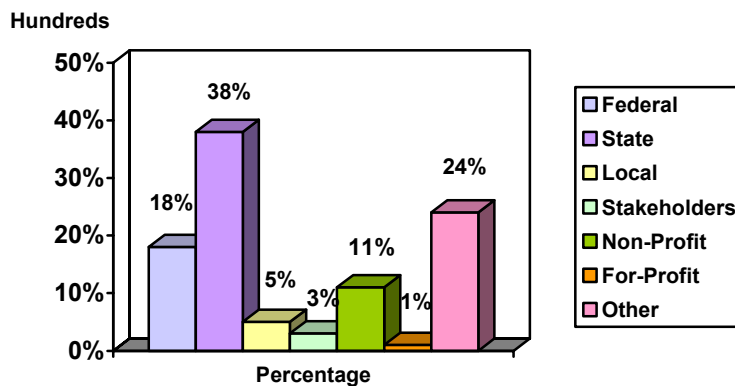
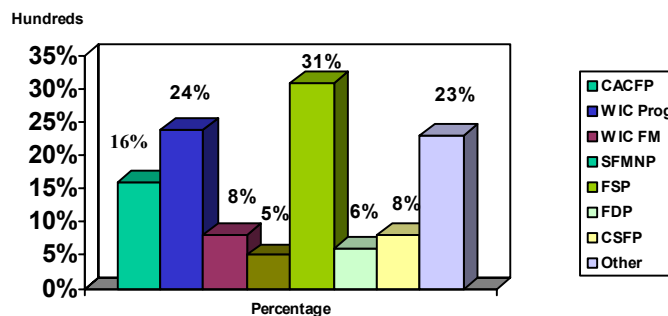


Table 2 shows that, over 30% of conference registrants work with the Food Stamp Program, over 20% work with the National School Lunch Program, and over 20% with the WIC Program.

Program Affiliation of Conference Registrants





Features In a Nutshell

The conference featured:

- Pre-conference skill building workshops on social marketing, motivational interviewing, and facilitated group discussion; more than 180 people attended these workshops;
- Networking Reception that allowed all to “Power Up!”
- Three plenary sessions, featuring national and international experts, and 54 interactive concurrent sessions;
- 60 poster presentations;
- 54 breakout sessions with more than 160 presentations by speakers from across the United States;
- Connect for Success networking sessions;
- An awards luncheon celebrating success in nutrition education in FNS programs;
- An exhibition including 12 USDA agencies with a food or nutrition-related focus and 28 State and other exhibitors spanning the spectrum from local agencies to Federal agencies to key partners; and
- Post conference FNS program-based training sessions. Over 300 people participated.

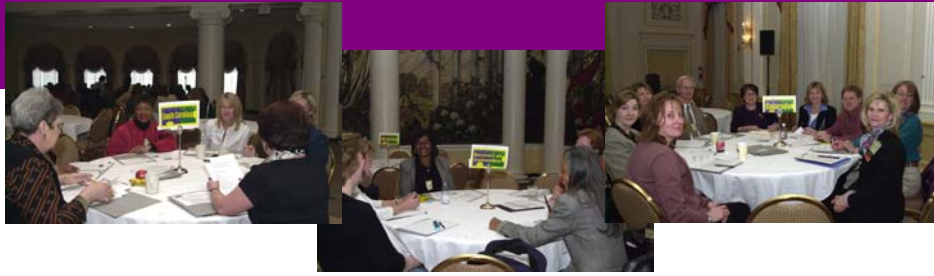
Reception

The Welcoming Reception featured a performance of the “Eat Smart. Play Hard.[™]” and “Power Up!” dance routines performed by Year 2 students from the Duke Ellington School of Performing Arts in Washington, DC. FNS Regional Offices lead other dance routines to make the evening an active one!



Plenary Sessions

- **T**he opening plenary session, moderated by Roberto Salazar, Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service, focused on collaboration and integrating comprehensive nutrition education across FNS programs. It featured a keynote address from Mr. William Potapchuk on collaboration and a panel that included Dr. William Dietz, CDC, Dr. Yvonne Bronner, Morgan State University, and Alberta Frost, FNS.
- Tuesday's plenary session, moderated by Under Secretary, Eric Bost, and featured a keynote address by USDA Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman. Other presenters included CDR Penelope Royall, President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sport, Dr. James Hill, University of Colorado Health Services Center, Dr. Marlene Schwartz, Yale University Center for Eating and Weight Disorders, and William Clay, Food and Agriculture Organization.
- The closing plenary session focused on "Visions for the Future." FNS Regional Administrators provided a summary of action plans formulated by states in their region. FNS Administrator Roberto Salazar discussed "Putting the Vision into Action." Gaye Lynn MacDonald, ASFSA, Jill Leppert, NWA, and Jerry Friedman, APHSA discussed current and future partnership activities. Deputy Under Secretary Suzanne Biermann delivered the closing remarks.



Connecting for Success: Networking Sessions

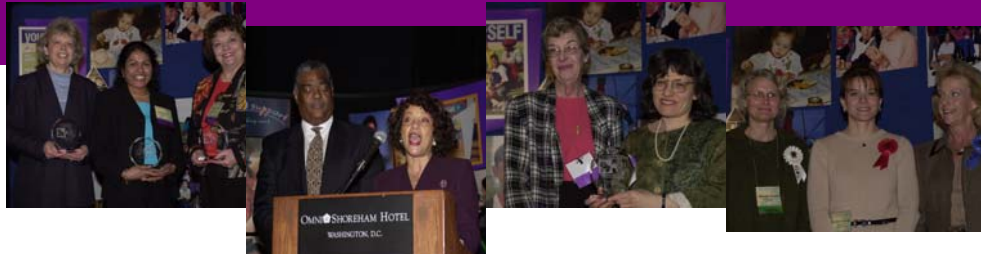
A major focus of the conference was promoting collaboration and use of integrated nutrition education approaches across FNS Programs. FNS organized facilitated networking sessions and invited States to designate staff to represent their Program in sessions.

- Over 300 individuals representing State agencies that administer the FNS programs in 49 States, the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands met in State groups during networking sessions.
- The purpose was to identify common goals and formulate a plan for working together across programs to achieve those goals.
- The goals were based on the priorities in the FNCS Corporate Plan, “Breaking the Barriers.”

What did the States decide? Here are the results:

- 21 States will work to foster partnerships and collaboration among FNS and other programs to promote healthy weight and
- 20 States agreed to promote healthy eating and physical activity per the Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- 5 States will promote and encourage collaborative interventions to increase consumptions of fruits and vegetables
- 3 States plan to educate parents, teachers and other adults about the importance of being good role models of healthy eating and physically active lifestyles
 - 1 State will focus on promoting healthy nutrition environments in schools including physical activity and related policies.
 - 1 State plans to conduct a campaign to promote increase intake of fruits and vegetables.

At the closing plenary session the FNS Regional Administrators summarized the goals selected by States in their region and reinforced their support of the process.



Awards

The awards luncheon recognized Leadership, Innovation and Nutrition Collaboration in nutrition education.

Winners included:

- **Iowa's "Pick a Better Snack" Social Marketing Campaign**
- **West Virginia's "Nutrition...The Next Generation, Nutrition Symposium"**
- **Georgia's "Take Charge of Your Health for Older Adults."**
- Conference CHOICE awards were awarded to the three exhibitors based receiving the highest votes from conference attendees based on their exhibit design and content.

Next Steps? Follow-up Activities

- **C**onference proceedings will be published that will summarize of the plenary sessions and seven concurrent sessions.
- The FNS conference website www.fns.usda.gov/nutritionconference has been updated to include presentations from the conference.
- A follow-up process has been drafted to ensure completion of the work started in the "Connecting for Success" networking sessions that includes action steps for Headquarters, Regional and state levels.
 - OANE will summarize and share results and post them on the website
 - OANE will draft and get input on the follow-up actions from RO and provide support
 - Regional offices will communicate action plan and timelines to states and facilitate completion of the Cross-program plans
 - States will work together to complete cross-program plan and make sure that all FNS Programs are represented
- States will keep Regional office informed as to progress.



Evaluation

The conference brought together nutrition educators and program administrators from all of the FNS programs and their partners, in a unique, multidisciplinary environment of professional exchange, collaboration, and action. Attendees shared best practices and effective strategies that have gotten results in achieving more positive eating behaviors in the FNS target population. Based on the results of the conference evaluation, most attendees felt that the overall conference and the conference location were excellent, and that the plenary and concurrent sessions were valuable. Further, virtually all attendees completing an evaluation form indicated that they learned something that they would use when they returned home. Further, attendees came away understanding the importance of collaboration and partnering towards bringing positive changes to the lives of FNS program participants. FNS thanks and commends all conference participants and presenters for helping to make this conference a grand success!

- 180 conference attendees completed the Conference Evaluation Form (approximately 20% of total conference registrants)
- Respondents represented 46 states and work in a variety of settings

Comments...

“Keep the conference going...very helpful and useful materials. Cost effective, worth every penny...”

“There were a variety of topics offered and the networking between programs was excellent. I am more familiar of where to go for resources.”

“This was a great conference—lots of fun...”

“Excellent conference! Thank You—please do this again.”

“Thank you for putting the energy toward a conference long overdue.”

“This was an excellent conference. Good opportunities for networking.”

Analysis, Nutrition, and Evaluation
3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22302
(703) 305-2585

